
Un supplément d'âme

Comme un supplément d'âme

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UN SUPPLÉMENT D'ÂME

→ Philippe Mesnard,
head of the editorial board

These last few years I have regularly been asked, during press or radio interviews, what I thought about the new wave or waves of anti-Semitism or judeophobia, as it is called. Statistical studies, rigorous scholarly research and journalistic inquiry demonstrate, through sad findings indeed, that **AN ANTI-JEWISH SENTIMENT HAS BECOME MORE PRESENT IN THE LAST FEW YEARS**. Intentional acts against Jews are on the rise, no longer restrained to profanation and insults. More partisan discourses also arise, which take into consideration the previous numbers and facts, and hardly conceal a satisfaction that such events occur – moreover, they encourage an increase in antagonisms.

Yet, on one side as on the other, people remain focused on current news and are short-sighted, as if the period from after the war time and until the year 2000 marked a consistent improvement of the situation, along with an ever-growing moral consciousness and its idyllic clichés. We could however shift points of view and propose another vision of anti-Semitism which, without challenging the truth of specialists, nor encouraging alarmists, would not hold to the narrow horizon of our present time but go further into the landscape of society and, inextricably, of culture. And to say, then, that there is a significant proportion of the population which – without it necessarily being due to a domestic transmission, nor even to a tradition or an allegiance – has always sustained a hatred for Jews, like an extra touch of spirit – un supplément d'âme – to ordinary racism. Some people could have

everything to be racists. In the end, they distinguish themselves with an anti-Semitism rooted either in extreme right or extreme left politics, which through its anti-Zionism can easily camouflage, encourage or support an anti-Semitic sentiment, whilst claiming to be anti-racist.

Well, one must accept that, during the past seventy years, nothing has changed about such fringes of the population, its mass remaining basically constant but no less difficult to locate. Radical groups risen from Islam perhaps do not make up the most numerous part, even if they are the most widely covered as they tend to be the most deadly. Nothing has changed for these people after the genocide of the Jews, after the lessons learnt from the great trials of criminals, after school programs, after pedagogical trips, films, books and events of all sorts. **THERE ARE PERHAPS NEW ANTI-SEMITISMS, BUT SOME ALSO DO NOT CHANGE** as they are rooted in a Western culture which not only offers them hospitality, but feeds into them by perpetuating clichés such as the “rich and hypocritical Jew” (for this see Phoenix, Christian Petzold's latest film, all in all a remarkable work which establishes the German filmmaker).

This is how, seventy years after the fall of the greatest enterprise that has ever aimed for the total destruction of the Jews, the latter still do not have the assurance of not being the target of criminals or fanatics who intentionally wish to remove them definitively and, now, in broad daylight. ■

Translation: Sarah Voke